focus

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ALICE TAYLOR, EDITOR

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Austria

Twice within a single generation the problem of an independent Austria (*Österreich*) has been under discussion among the statesmen of the world. Twice, after a long and devastating war, Austria has emerged dependent upon outside powers for its economic well-being, its future decided by others.

The Austria that emerged at the end of World War I was organized around the core area of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy (the Vienna Basin) and was largely confined to its former Alpine holdings. The main problem then was to adjust to the much smaller area. The Austria that emerged at the end of World War II, after seven years of complete absorption into the German economy, was re established within its prewar boundaries; but as a result of the war and the subsequent occupation damages, the economy has had to be rebuilt from scratch. In addition, the country has now been occupied for nine years. After the recent Berlin conference of the four occupying powers, it became evident to the people of Austria that their hope for a treaty and freedom is inevitably bound up with the so-called "cold war" and the settlement of more complex problems.

For the Soviet Union, the occupation of the eastern part of the country (the old Eastern March of Bavaria in the Holy Roman Empire), including the oil-rich, fertile, and highly industrialized Vienna Basin, means not only control of much of Austria's most productive land but also domination of major roads converging here from Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Yugoslavia, and southern Germany. For Austria, the present situation once more emphasizes the country's ancient function as a march guarding parts of central, southern and western Europe against incursion from the east.

Traditionally, Austria, which is somewhat smaller than the state of Maine, is divided into five main regions: the Alps with their longitudinal and transverse valleys, the granite uplands (Bohemian Plateau), the Alpine foreland, the inner and outer Vienna Basin, and the Styrian Basin.

As may be seen on the map, almost 70 per cent of the country is mountainous. The northern Alps form a belt of sharp peaks, barren high plateaus, and deeply incised valleys, most of which is unproductive land. To the north of this lies a zone of rounded hills and gentle slopes, with small fertile valleys and pastures. The central Alps, consisting of many mountain chains, are picturesque but sparsely settled; numerous glaciated peaks rise to more than 10,000 feet. Few routes cross the central Alps, but all of them have been in use since Roman times. The main arteries of east-west transportation follow the Inn, Salzach, Enns, and Mürz Rivers, and it is here that a large proportion of the Alpine population dwells.

Between the Bavarian and Bohemian border and the Danube lie the granite uplands, covered with scattered dense forests. Here the Danube is swift, and the country beautiful, but the soils are generally poor, and the small farm patches are almost as widely dispersed as in the higher mountain regions.

In the Alpine foreland, between the northern Alps and the granite uplands, some fine farms are interspersed in among the forests, steep scarps, terraces, and many glaciated lakes. In the Styrian Basin, an area of rolling hills, broad valleys, and fertile meadows, a milder climate is conducive to intensive land utilization and high agricultural yields. But most of the best farmland in Austria lies in the Alpine foreland and in parts of the Vienna Basin.

For the country as a whole the average January temperature is 22° F., the average July temperature 64° F., but, characteristic of mountain regions, the climate varies greatly from place to place. Local differences in exposure to the sun and the length of shade, especially noticeable in the east-west valleys, are major factors in the distribution of settlements and croplands. On sunny slopes settlements extend higher; the colder, usually forested, slopes are avoided. Temperatures are higher along the southern slopes and the edges of mountain ranges. Where there is temperature inversion in winter, the slopes are warmer than the valleys. For these reasons, Alpine settlements are usually located on slopes, terraces, and alluvial cones, for greater protection against low winter and night temperatures, as well as against floods.

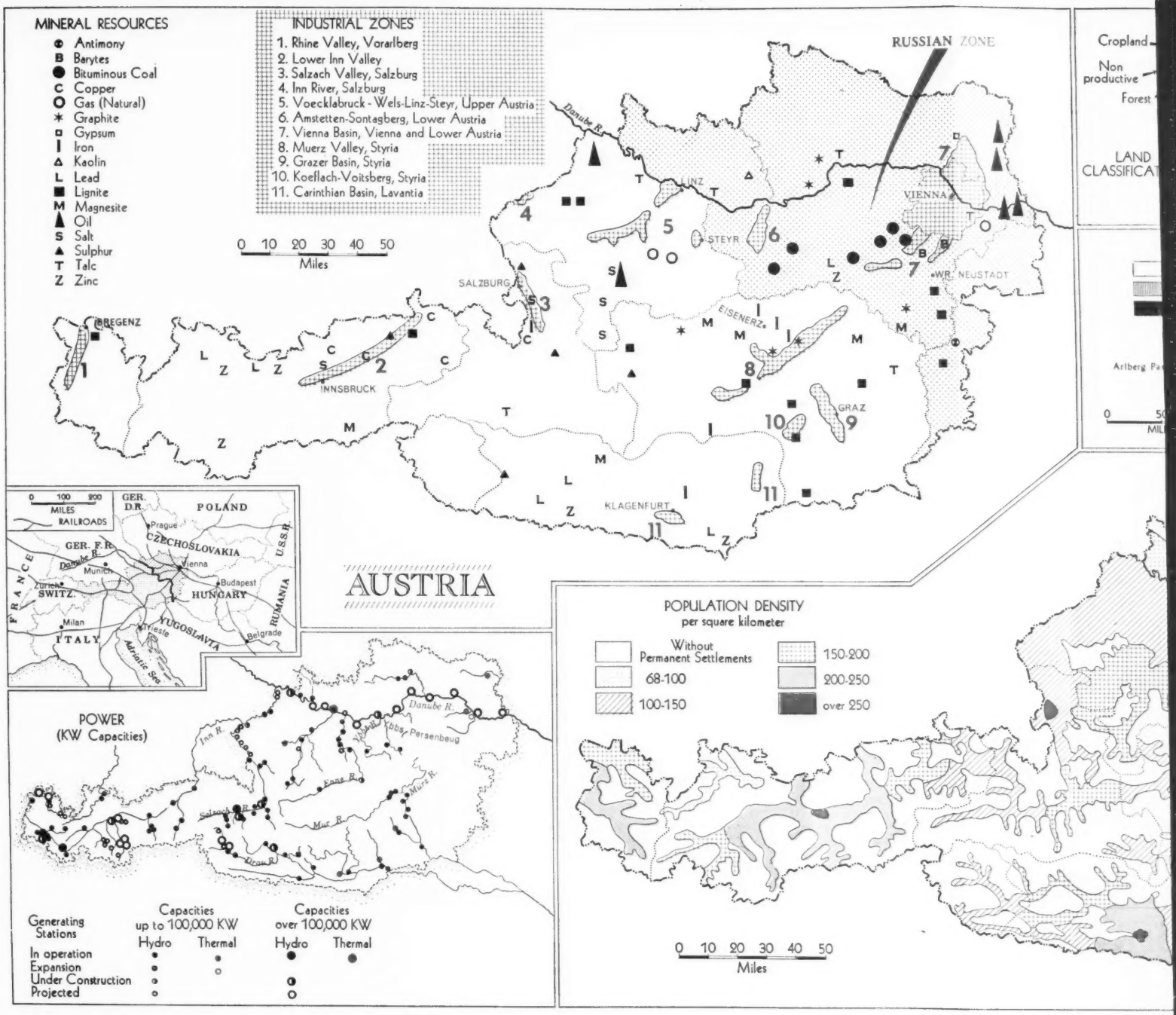
Except in the Vienna Basin and in certain interior valleys, rainfall is everywhere more than 40 inches in an average year. Snow covers Austria from two to five months of the year, and in areas above 6,000 feet for as long as seven or eight months, with depths up to 30 feet. Besides this, numerous local winds are characteristic of the Alps. The foehn, perhaps the best-known, is responsible for the sudden melting of snow and the avalanches that endanger isolated mountain communities. But, on the other hand, the foehn also accounts for the extension of agriculture into some high Alpine valleys.

Only about one-third of Austria's land is arable. Under the best possible conditions, with present technology and available land, the country can produce no more than 75 or 80 per cent of the food needed. The chief crops are rye, wheat, oats, and barley; maize is grown in small quantities. Because, even with reclamation and improved irrigation, very little new land can be put into use, special attention is now being given to increasing yields. A substantial increase in output per acre would save valuable foreign currency, about 30 per cent of which is spent for food imports. It would also bring additional income to the state treasury, and increase employment.

During the last few years the government, in close cooperation with the United States Economic Mission to Austria, has been undertaking a program of mechanization and electrification of farm equipment; it is improving rural roads, encouraging expansion of cooperatives, building cold-storage facilities, providing seeds and artificial fertilizers, encouraging consolidation of scattered farm holdings, and is launching various other schemes in the hope of raising production. Much has been accomplished since the end of the war, but the problem of how to increase acreage and agricultural output is a continuous and serious one.

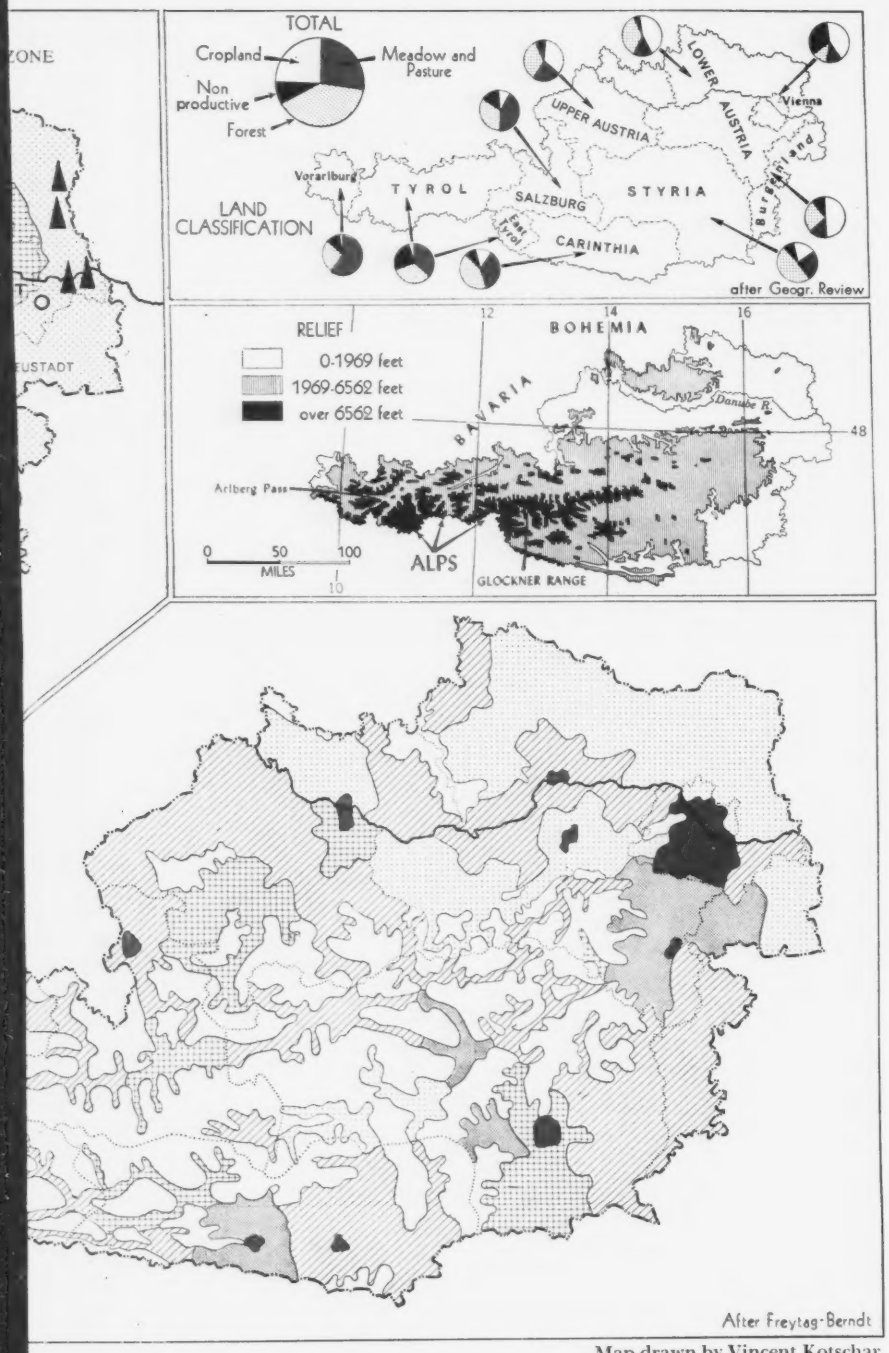
The petroleum, mineral, water power, and timber outlook is much brighter than it was in the dark days of 1945. Even though most of Austria's petroleum and refining facilities are in the Soviet zone of occupation, sufficient quantities of oil were released in 1953 to cover the country's minimum needs. But additional large quantities—about 1.5 to 2 million tons annually—are being used by the Soviet Union or are being sent to its satellites, and thus contribute nothing to the Austrian economy.

With the exception of bituminous coal, Austria is fortunate in having considerable mineral deposits, many of which have been mined since the war with new and modern machinery supplied with United States help. The iron-ore deposits of Styria are of excellent quality, and production is sufficient to meet domestic needs even in the face of the present expanded steel industry. Other minerals mined are salt, talc, gypsum, magnesite, lead, and, in increasing quantities, bauxite, china clay, graphite, antimony, and pyrite. Many of these are exported and contribute to the country's growing foreign trade. Lignite is available, and increasing amounts are being used by domestic industries and thermal power plants. The shortage of bituminous coal is the cause of many difficulties; at present 3 or 4 million tons must be imported annually, 90 per cent of which comes from the Ruhr in western Germany, Silesia in Poland, and the United States. Partly to compensate for dependence upon imported coal, Austria is steadily expanding its hydroelectric power; and it can well afford to do so,



Industrial Zones

1. Textiles, paper, chocolate.
2. Textiles, salt, seamless pipes, optical instruments, glass, tobacco, machinery, aluminum goods, saw mills, glassware, pharmaceutical products, light metals.
3. Timber, cement, steel, chemicals, optical instruments, brewery, food processing, light machinery.
4. Aluminum (Ranshofen).
5. Cellulose, brewery, steam power plant, electrical equipment, textiles, ceramics, machinery, steel, fertilizers, synthetic rubber, optical instruments, furniture, prefabricated houses, weaving, food processing, automobiles, tractors.
6. Steel, paper and pulp, light metals.
7. Miscellaneous light industries: electrical equipment, radios, textiles, leather, furniture, optical instruments, chemicals, food processing, clothing, glass, paper. Heavy industries in southern Vienna Basin: steel, machinery.
8. Timber, steel, machinery, chemicals, paper and pulp, cellulose.
9. Paper and pulp, machinery, bicycles, textiles, leather.
10. Glass, steam plant, coal mining and supply industries.
11. Metals, cellulose, chemicals, paper and pulp, saw mills, brewery, leather, machinery, cellulose.



Map drawn by Vincent Kotschar

for it has the second-largest power reserve in Europe. In 1953, hydroelectric power supplied 77 per cent of Austria's energy needs. Much building is in progress, principally reservoirs in the Glockner range (Tauernkraftwerk) and at Ybbs-Persenbeug on the Danube, a site recently released by the Soviet Union, which is the largest undertaking.

A new "inter-Alpine" organization hopes to use the water resources of Vorarlberg and Tyrol for a European power project. Hand in hand with the growth of hydroelectricity goes the expansion of the high-tension grid connecting Austria with its neighbors. This increase in hydroelectric capacity not only will serve the internal economy but will bring about a closer integration of that of Europe. More than one-seventh of the 1953 production was exported to foreign countries, some of them as far away as France.

One of Austria's greatest assets is its forests, which cover more than a third of the land. Coniferous trees, especially spruce, Scotch pine, and beech, predominate. These forests make it possible for Austria to be one of the few European countries that export not only timber and paper but also cardboard and prefabricated houses. During the war annual felling exceeded annual increment; but excellent and long-standing conservation and forestry methods, which cover both government and private holdings, coupled with many improvements made possible by American aid since the war, have brought lumbering back to its high prewar standards.

Industrial production in Austria has changed basically since prewar days. Between 1918 and 1938 timber, paper, metals, electrical equipment, and textiles were the main industries, employing more than half of the country's industrial workers. During the German occupation the emphasis shifted to iron,

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steel, aluminum, and chemicals. Several of the new plants built during this period were intended to serve a Europe under unified German control, and thus some are poorly located and poorly geared for Austrian needs. Nevertheless, Austria's total industrial capacity has greatly increased, despite considerable war and occupation damages—many industries located in the Soviet zone have been dismantled and shipped to the U.S.S.R. or have been forced to produce for the sole benefit of that country.

Among the larger plants built during the war and expanded since with American assistance, mention should be made of the United Iron and Steel Works in Linz, equipped with modern blast furnaces and steel-processing mills, a large nitrogenous-fertilizer plant nearby, and the big Ranshofen aluminum plant with a capacity of 60,000 tons (production in 1953, 31,000 tons) on the Inn River. Others that have been built, rebuilt, or modernized include the Steyr automobile plant, the iron and steel works in Styria, the famous glassworks, formerly in Czechoslovakia, now in Upper Austria and Tyrol, and many medium-sized plants, all of which contribute to the expanded industrial output and foreign trade.

However, certain danger signals must be watched, foremost among which are increased imports of raw materials, which threaten to strain the national budget; the less competitive location of many plants, which results in higher production costs; and the present East-West split in Europe, which has adversely affected the natural trading position of Austria. Long-established channels of trade with the countries of Eastern Europe have been disrupted. Producers of machinery and luxury items have been forced to seek new markets in the West and overseas. Food that used to come from southeastern Europe now has to be secured from the United States and other overseas countries at much higher costs.

Most of the industries established since 1939 are located at some distance from the old industrial core, the Vienna Basin, a fact that is partly responsible for a more even distribution of the population than in prewar days. Today 52 per cent of the country's nearly seven million people live in the western provinces, and 48 per cent in the eastern. Austria cannot be said to be overcrowded—the population density is relatively low (209 per square mile). But if we consider its mountainous character and the relative scarcity of fertile land, the density per square mile of agricultural land is rather high.

One-third of the people live in cities of more than 100,000, one-third in villages of less than 2,000. Vienna, with nearly one-quarter of the total population, is by far the largest city, even though its population has decreased steadily since 1918 because of the country's changed political position in Central Europe. For centuries one of the great cities of Europe, and the onetime capital of Austria-Hungary, a state of 60 million people, Vienna is today an occupied city without an adequate hinterland. Among the other

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focus is published monthly (except July and August) by the American Geographical Society to provide background facts and geographical interpretations of current world problems and problem areas. Subscription: $1 for 10 issues ($1.25 Canada, Alaska, Hawaii). Copies of the Society's four-color Map of the World (approximately five by three feet; equatorial scale 1:30,000,000) may be purchased by all Focus subscribers at the special discount price of 75 cents each.

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Contributing editors to Focus: G. H. T. Kimble, and G. M. Wrigley.

Forthcoming issues of *FOCUS* will deal with Belgian Congo; India's Population Problem; and Spain.
Previous issues, available at 10 cents each (payable in advance), deal with: Korea; the Ruhr; Water in the United States; Viet Nam; Yugoslavia; Outlook for Steel (map only available); Poliomyelitis in the United States; Outlook for Wood; Resources of the Arctic; Great Britain; Venezuela; New York City; Germany; Japan; Poland; Resources of the Tropics: I—Africa; Turkey; Puerto Rico; France; Resources of the Tropics: II—South America; Italy; Kenya; Alaska; Union of South Africa; Hongkong; Outlook for the Arid Realm of the United States; Iraq; Resources of the Tropics: III—Southeast Asia; Nigeria; the Netherlands; and Human Starvation. **Out of print** (photostats available at $1.50 each): U.S.S.R. Oil; Strategic Iran; The Changing South; Egypt; Israel; Morocco; and Pakistan

large cities are Graz, Linz, Salzburg, and Innsbruck; many of them are famous throughout the world for their musical festivals, their educational facilities, and their beautiful surroundings. Drawn by such attractions, thousands of tourists visit Austria each year, and in fact the tourist trade constitutes a sizable source of income.

Because of its location, the fate of Austria's raw materials and industrial capacity is of concern to many nations. The United States has encouraged its quick rehabilitation and has contributed large sums of money and technical aid to modernize existing facilities, construct new plants, and rehabilitate agriculture. The Soviet Union, on the other hand, is hampering Austria by control of many of its industries and by expropriation of huge quantities of petroleum. In Austrian hands these petroleum surpluses could be traded for much-needed bituminous coal and foodstuffs, thereby greatly improving the overall economic position of the country. To some extent the increased hydroelectric-power production has reduced dependence upon coal imports, but here too Soviet interference has slowed hydroelectric building programs. However, Austria's position is much better than Germany's, for it has had its own elected government since liberation, and the occupation zones have not played the dividing role they have assumed in Germany.

Two world wars, nearly continuous dependence on foreign aid since 1918, nine years of occupation, and a steady stream of foreign tourists have all contributed toward giving the people of Austria an international outlook. In no other country of Europe is there such strong backing for the unification of Europe, the abolishment of customs barriers, and international cooperation.

GEORGE W. HOFFMAN

Dr. Hoffman is associate professor in the Department of Geography, The University of Texas.

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List of AGS Publications

A new list of the Society's publications, including periodicals, books, maps, and filmstrips, is available upon request.

Study of Lemon Creek Glacier

The seven members of the 1954 expedition of the Juneau Ice Field Research Project recently left Juneau, Alaska, for a three-month stay on Lemon Creek Glacier, where they will conduct detailed studies which will contribute to the knowledge and definition of the relationship between weather and glacial behavior. They hope to determine what the future action of this and other glaciers in the area will be, by studying its present state and what has taken place in the past, as recorded in layers of ice and snow, and conditions at its source and terminus, including patterns of vegetation.

As in previous years, this AGS project is being carried on under contract with the Office of Naval Research, with logistical support from the United States Army and Air Force.